

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 23, 2007

Chairpersons and Members
Board of Land and Natural Resources
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii

Land Board Members:

SUBJECT: Proposed public shooting range in the makai area of the Puu Anahulu Game Management Area (GMA) of the Big Island, North Kona District, Hawaii, Tax Map Keys (3) 7-1-003 and 7-1-004.

BACKGROUND:

Lack of an appropriate designated shooting range has long been a concern of Big Island residents and law enforcement agencies. Hawaii Island has one public shooting facility, a trap and skeet range, which accommodates shotgun shooters only. No official site is available for rifle and pistol shooters. As a result, a number of "informal" shooting sites that are unsupervised and unregulated are being used, creating potential safety risks.

Development of a public shooting facility on the island of Hawaii has been discussed for the past 20 years, and a number of alternative sites have been considered. In June 2002, the Department of Land and Natural Resources initiated effort to develop a management plan for the public lands at Pu'u Wa'awa'a, assisted by a newly formed Pu'u Wa'awa'a Ahupua'a Advisory Council. The completed management plan was approved in concept by the Land Board in July 2003. Objective 62 of the plan specified that a public shooting facility be an integral part of managed development of the public lands.

A 14-member Shooting Range Working Group was subsequently formed in June 2004. Representatives were selected from several island gun and archery clubs, the Hawaii County Council, Hawaii County Police Department, the Forestry and Wildlife, and the Conservation and Resource Enforcement Divisions of DLNR, and other interested citizens.

The Range Working Group held a series of meetings through May 2005. During that period, the functional elements desired in a multi purpose shooting facility were established. A preliminary layout drawing was made, showing their proposed arrangement in the shooting complex. The land area required to support the facility was determined, and the priority of construction was established.

As currently proposed, the shooting complex would contain a 1000-yard competitive high power rifle range, a 100-yard high power target rifle range, a 100-yard rim-fire/air rifle range, a 50-yard bull's-eye pistol range, a 50-yard action pistol range, skeet and trap ranges, a 10-station sporting clays course, a 50-yard target archery range, and a field archery course. Office structures, a hunter education center, restrooms, and picnic and parking areas are included in the proposed complex.

The Working Group identified a potential site for further evaluation located in the Pu'u Anahulu GMA, mauka of Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway, near mile marker 77. The site's northwest corner abuts the southeast corner of the adjacent Pu'u Anahulu landfill, on which a brackish water well is located, and power service is available.

The site is accessed from Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway. It is located on the Kaniku Lava Flow, and consists of loose a'a lava, devoid of vegetation. It is not currently known to contain culturally significant artifacts. The closest inhabited structures are the Hilton Waikoloa and Waikaloa Beach Marriot resorts, several miles distant.

Preliminary sound propagation studies by the Department of Health, hunters, and DOFAW staff were conducted in July and August 2005. High powered rifle shots fired at the Pu'u Anahulu site were either barely audible, or inaudible at the resort locations. Sound measurements were at levels comparable to road noise and equipment operation. Data indicate perceived noise levels can be attenuated by changes in discharge elevation and direction of fire. Concentrating high power rifle discharges in existing depressions at the site will likely attenuate transmitted sound to inaudible levels at inhabited locations.

At a meeting held in August 2006, with representatives of the County administration and Pu'u Anahulu landfill contract operator present, it was determined that the proposed shooting facility's use of the landfill's paved access road was feasible. Use of the existing landfill road for range access would provide significant cost savings in facility construction.

The satisfactory location, likely low impact, high need, and high consensus of stakeholders have created a unique opportunity to do the planning for a public shooting range, with some expectation of success. \$100,000 for statewide shooting range planning and facilities is available through the federal Pittman-Robertson allocation of money to DOCARE's Hunter Education Program. Planning money and supplementary construction in cooperation with the adjacent landfill contract organization, will be matched with other in-kind contributions, and funds from other agencies and organizations. Nation-wide, the National Rifle Association has been a lead organization in the development of fully-compliant shooting ranges, and the NRA provides a handbook, annual workshops, a complete manual, and other resources and technical assistance.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Land and Natural Resources:

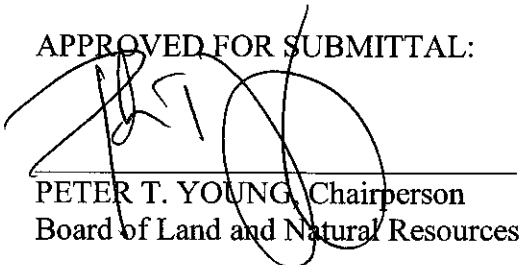
1. Approve in concept the creation of public shooting range in the makai area of the Puu Anahulu GMA of the Big Island, North Kona District, Hawaii, Tax Map Keys (3) 7-1-003 and 7-1-004.
2. Authorize the Department staff to continue work to develop the facility, including continued collaboration with the Working Group and completion of an Environmental Assessment and any other federal regulatory requirements needed for approval.

Respectfully submitted,

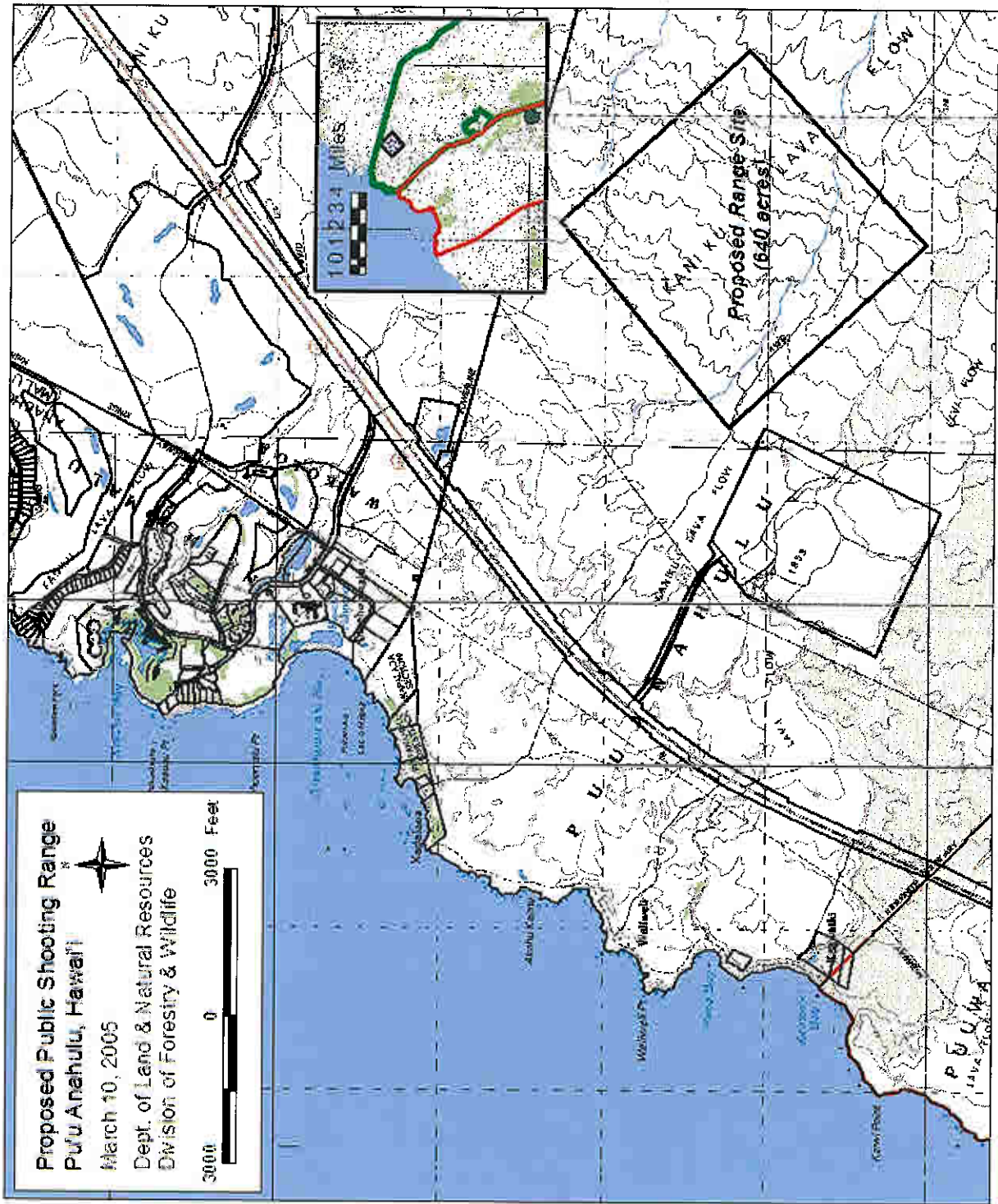


PAUL J. CONRY
Administrator

APPROVED FOR SUBMITTAL:



PETER T. YOUNG, Chairperson
Board of Land and Natural Resources



Proposed Public Shooting Range
Pu'u Anahulu, Hawaii
March 10, 2005
Dept. of Land & Natural Resources
Division of Forestry & Wildlife

3000 0 3000 Feet